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REQUEST FOR THE INCLUSION OF AN ITEM IN THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA OF THE FORTY-SEVENTH SESSION

OBSERVER STATUS FOR THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION IN THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Letter dated 13 July 1992 from the representatives of Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Bolivia, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Honduras, Hungary, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Latvia, Luxembourg, Morocco, the Netherlands, Norway, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, the Philippines, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, Romania, the Russian Federation, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Turkey, Uruguay, Venezuela and Viet Nam to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

We have the honour to address Your Excellency, upon instructions from our Governments, which are members or observers of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), to request, in accordance with rule 13 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, the inclusion in the provisional agenda of the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly of an item entitled "Observer status for the International Organization for Migration in the General Assembly".

In accordance with rule 20 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, an explanatory memorandum concerning the request is annexed to this letter.

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ANNEX

Explanatory memorandum

In the aftermath of the Second World War, interested States recognized the need for an international migration mechanism to deal with the problem of displaced persons and refugees in Europe, as well as with future refugee movements, and with the orderly migration of nationals from Europe. They considered that there should be an international organization with a technical-operational mandate that would, inter alia:

(a) Furnish special migration services to ensure the smooth accomplishment of migratory movements and the settlement of the migrants in their countries of adoption;

(b) Promote the cooperation of Governments and international organizations in the field of migration; and

(c) Make all necessary arrangements for the transfer of migrants and refugees to countries of immigration and resettlement.

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) was founded on 5 December 1951 by the Migration Conference, held at Brussels, Belgium. It started its operations in early 1952 as the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration (ICEM).

A constitution was adopted on 19 October 1953 and came into force on 30 November 1954.

The organization had been created to deal with issues which, in 1951, appeared to be of a temporary nature. Over the years, however, it became evident that problems related to the voluntary or forced movement of people were increasing. The organization progressively assumed an important role in addressing some of the most urgent problems the international community was facing. The issues IOM was asked to deal with changed in character and also came to cover a broader geographical area. Accordingly, the functions of the organization were adjusted to meet new needs and developments in the field of migration.

In 1979, the Council (comprised of all member States) concluded that the organization should provide its services on a universal basis, in recognition of the fact that its activities outside Europe had significantly increased, both as a result of the dramatic growth of the refugee and displaced persons phenomenon worldwide and the broader acceptance of the concept that migration was an effective means for the transfer of technology through human resources.

In November 1984, the Council approved the principle of an updating of the 1953 Constitution. The purpose was to enhance the mandate and scope of activities of the organization, as well as to transform a de facto situation

into a de jure situation, thereby giving full strength to the various resolutions adopted by the organization's governing bodies over the years. Another purpose was to ensure the continued effectiveness of the organization in view of new challenges in the field of migration.

On 20 May 1987, the Council adopted the proposed amendments to the Constitution, recognizing, in particular:

(a) That to ensure an orderly migration, migration services may be needed throughout the world in a variety of circumstances, such as temporary migration, return migration, intraregional migration, and concern a variety of people, such as refugees, displaced persons, labour migrants and highly skilled migrants;

(b) The link between migration and development, inter alia, through the transfer of qualified human resources, which may stimulate the creation of new economic opportunities in receiving countries;

(c) The role of the organization as a universal forum to promote research and international consultation on migration issues, so as to understand the causes and consequences of migration, to analyse the specific needs of migrants and to look for practical solutions;

(d) That the needs of developing countries should be taken into account;

(e) The need for close cooperation among international organizations involved in this field, with a view to facilitating the coordination of international activities and based on the mutual respect of their competences.

In recognition of these changes, and to be in keeping with the universal mandate of the organization, the Council also decided to change the name to that of International Organization for Migration.

The amendments, adopted by the Council in May 1987, entered into force on 14 November 1989 when two thirds of the member States had formally notified the organization of their ratification.

The objective of IOM is to ensure, throughout the world, the orderly migration of persons who are in need of international migration services. To meet its objective, IOM carries out the following functions:

(a) The handling of orderly and planned migration of nationals who desire to migrate to countries where they may achieve self-dependence through their employment and live with their families in dignity and self-respect. National migration from traditional emigration countries or to traditional immigration countries is one of the oldest functions entrusted to IOM;

(b) The transfer of qualified human resources, including members of their family, who are thus in a position to contribute to the development of the receiving countries. Migration of qualified human resources will be

increasingly in demand. It can take various forms, such as return of skilled personnel (including that of former refugees), selective migration, provision of integrated experts, labour reinsertion, horizontal technical cooperation in the field of human resources, or migration of investors;

(c) The organized transfer of refugees, displaced persons and other individuals in need of international migration services. The orderly migration of refugees, displaced persons, and members of their families was also one of the key functions entrusted to IOM at its inception;

(d) The provision of a forum to States and international governmental and non-governmental organizations to exchange views, discuss experiences, devise measures and promote cooperation and coordination of efforts on international migration issues.

In carrying out its activities, IOM works closely with a variety of governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental partners. These range from national authorities and United Nations organs and agencies, such as the International Labour Organisation, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator, the United Nations Volunteers, the Economic Commission for Europe, the Economic Commission for Africa, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, to regional intergovernmental organizations such as the Council of Europe, the Organization of American States and the European Economic Community, and to non-governmental organizations, such as the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the International Committee of the Red Cross. In the latter category, a number of national and international voluntary agencies involved in refugee and migration matters have particularly close working relations with IOM. IOM also participates as an Executing Agency in the work coordinated by the Office of the Executive Delegate of the Secretary-General for the United Nations inter-agency humanitarian programme for Iraq, Kuwait and the Iraq/Iran and Iraq/Turkey border areas.

IOM is composed of 46 member States: Angola, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Bolivia, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Honduras, Hungary, Israel, Italy, Kenya, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Nicaragua, Norway, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Uganda, United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela and Zambia.

The following 35 States have observer status: Albania, Belize, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cape Verde, Croatia, Czechoslovakia, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Holy See, India, Indonesia, Japan, Jordan, Latvia, Mexico, Morocco, Namibia, New Zealand, Pakistan, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Sao Tomé and Principe, Senegal, Somalia, Slovenia, Spain, Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Viet Nam, Yugoslavia, Zimbabwe and Malta.

The member States of the International Organization for Migration are of the view that their organization could benefit greatly from an observer relationship with the United Nations General Assembly and also contribute to the activities of the Organization.

Accordingly, the International Organization for Migration requests that it be granted observer status to the General Assembly on terms similar to those that have been prescribed in respect of other associations of States.